

Message Text

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SUBJ: PERSONAL POST-SCRIPT ON ASSASSINATION OF THE BRITISH
AMBASSADOR

1. THIS IS MY PERSONAL POST-SCRIPT TO THE ASSASSINATION OF
AMBASSADOR EWART-BIGGS. I HAVE NO OBJECTION IF THE DEPARTMENT
WISHES TO USE THIS PUBLICLY: MY WIFE AND I HAD LUNCH WITH
AMBASSADOR AND MRS. EWART-BIGGS LAST SATURDAY, AND I SPENT AN
HOUR WITH HIM IN MY OFFICE ON MONDAY, JULY 19. WE HAD A NUMBER
OF MUTUAL FRIENDS AND SHARED EXPERIENCES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
THE WORLD. FROM OUR FIRST MEETING I HAD A DISTINCT IMPRESSION
THAT THERE EXISTED THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD FRIENDSHIP ON BOTH A
PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LEVEL.

2. EWART-BIGGS' APPEARANCE AND STYLE WERE REDOLENT OF THE CLASSICAL
BRITISH DIPLOMAT. IN CENTRAL CASTING TERMS HE WAS A MIXTURE OF
ROLAND YOUNG, BASIL RATHBONE, AND NIGEL BRUCE. HIS SPARE AND
LANGUID FIGURE, THE BLACK EYE-PIECE, AND THE OCCASIONAL SPEECH
HESITANCY CONTRIVED TO PRESENT A NEAR CARICATURE OF HIS TYPE.

3. THE MONOCLE VEILED AN EYE LOST IN THE BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN.
HIS GOOD EYE WAS WELL PEELED FOR THE REALITIES OF LIFE, HOWEVER,
AND HIS LANGUOR CAMOUFLAGED AN INTENSELY PROFESSIONAL NATURE.
EWART-BIGGS WAS AN ABLE, COMPASSIONATE, AND DISARMING MAN WHO, I
SUSPECT, COULD HAVE BROUGHT A NEW ELEMENT TO THE IRELAND-UK
DIALOGUES HERE.

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RM EWART-BIGGS TOLD ME THAT HE SAW THE NORTH-SOUTH SITUATION IN

IRELAND IN EC TERMS, AND WAS PARTIALLY CONVINCED THAT SOME SOLUTIONS, IF NOT RECONCILIATIONS, MIGHT LIE IN THAT DIRECTION. HE WAS AS YET UNFAMILIAR WITH IRELAND ON A FIRST-HAND BASIS, AND ADMITTED THAT HE WAS NOT WHOLLY VERSED IN THE COMPLEX NUANCES WHICH CHARACTERIZE THE CONTENTIONS FROM THE STANDPOINTS OF ECONOMICS, RELIGION, POLITICS, CIVIL RIGHTS, ETHNICITY, AND HISTORY IN GENERAL. HIS WILLINGNESS AND OBVIOUSLY SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO LEARNING ABOUT THIS COMPLEX SITUATION WAS EVIDENT. HIS ADMISSION COULD HAVE BEEN CALCULATED SELF-DISPARAGEMENT.

5. I DO NOT FEEL THAT EWART-BIGGS' UNABASHED PANACHE SERVED AS A MAGNET FOR THE VIOLENCE THAT KILLED HIM YESTERDAY. MY OWN SPECULATION AT THIS MOMENT IS THAT THE PRIME TARGET OF THE ASSASSINATION WAS PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY CUBBON, ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE NORTH. BUT THE PERPETRATION OF AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS TRAGEDY STILL REMAIN UNKNOWN, AND I AM SURE THAT THE IRISH GOVERNMENT WILL "USE EVERY RESOURCE" (QUOTE: PRIME MINISTER COSGRAVE), IN THE SEARCH FOR THE KILLERS.

6. ON BRIEF ACQUAINTANCE I LIKED EWART-BIGGS, AND I FEEL THAT HIS ELIMINATION FROM THE DIPLOMATIC SCENE HAS PRECIPITATED AN EVEN GREATER LOSS AND ANGUISH THAN HIS ASSASSINS PLANNED FOR.

7. AND TO MRS. EWART-BIGGS I CAN ONLY EXPRESS MY PROFUND CONDOLENCES, AND MY HOPE THAT SHE CAN TAKE COMFORT IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS GIFTED MAN HAD SERVED HIS COUNTRY AND ALL OF US WELL. CURLEY

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